

MINUTES
GREEN BAY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Thursday, November 21, 2013, 10:30 a.m.
1424 Admiral Court, Second Floor Reading Room
Green Bay, WI 54303

MEMBERS PRESENT: W. VandeCastle–Vice Chair, S. Popp, B. Goodlet, A. LaHaie

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: R. Strong, R. Hallet, N. Aderholdt, K. Vang, C. Androsky

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approval of the October 17, 2013, minutes of the Green Bay Housing Authority

A motion was made by B. Goodlet and seconded by S. Popp to approve meeting minutes of October 17, 2013, as presented. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Authority officially welcomed A. LaHaie as the new Resident Commissioner of the Green Bay Housing Authority.

OLD BUSINESS:

2. Discussion and possible action regarding Congress's T-HUD Bill

R. Hallet reported on the progress of the 2013 T-HUD Bill. The bill is currently stalled by Congressional partisanship, and passage in the near future is unlikely. R. Hallet suggested the Authority continue to postpone letter-writing efforts until the bill comes up for debate again. S. Popp explained that the bill is still being drafted in committee. The Authority agreed to monitor the issue and take action when necessary.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Approval of written smoke-free policy

R. Hallet presented a draft version of the Green Bay Housing Authority No-Smoking Policy Lease Addendum. The draft included Electronic Cigarettes (E-cigarettes) in the No-Smoking policy on the grounds – that the technology is new and further research into health and property effects is necessary. It is known that E-cigarettes reduce the level of second-hand smoke, but other side effects on health and property are still unknown. There have been incidents of E-cigarettes exploding, causing concern for physical safety and property damage.

A. LaHaie stated that E-cigarettes could be a helpful transition tool to the new policy for residents who currently use cigarettes. Additionally, residents who are physically unable to use the proposed Smoking Shelter may find E-cigarettes their only alternative.

R. Hallet asked if A. LaHaie could elaborate on the usefulness of E-cigarettes as a quitting tool for residents. A. LaHaie explained that habitual smokers may find the physical act of holding and smoking the E-cigarette may satisfy the impulse to smoke.

R. Strong opined that E-cigarettes allowed on the grounds do not produce second-hand smoke. This removes the health danger to other residents, as well as property damage. R. Hallet asked what byproducts E-cigarettes emit. K. Vang explained that a vapor is released with little or no nicotine/smoke content. R. Hallet inquired about the property damage that can result from E-cigarette use. K. Vang and A. LaHaie expressed there is little or no known property damage.

W. VandeCastle suggested that the Authority approve the smoke-free policy with the allowance of the use of E-cigarettes. The prohibition of E-cigarettes would be reserved until more information is gathered.

A. LaHaie stated from a resident's perspective that if this version of the policy were approved, she would buy an E-cigarette. R. Strong stated that it is not the policy's intent to make residents quit smoking, only to protect other residents from second-hand smoke and to prevent Green Bay Housing Authority property from being damaged. R. Strong expressed that if the use of E-cigarettes does not harm other people or property, it should be permitted in the policy.

N. Aderholdt suggested that a provision be added to the policy that releases the GBHA from responsibility if an E-cigarette explodes. It should be made clear in the policy that E-cigarettes are exempt from the no smoking rule but are used at the users' own risk.

W. VandeCastle reiterated his suggestion that the policy be approved with the allowance of the use of E-cigarettes. Further study on E-cigarettes will continue, and amendments to the policy will be made as needed. R. Hallet stated that it should be made clear in the policy that the use of E-cigarettes is subject to review as new information is made available.

R. Hallet highlighted other areas of the policy, including the areas of Mason Manor where smoking would be permitted and prohibited. Smoking would be prohibited from apartments and the pool room, where it is currently permitted. It would be allowed in the gazebo, which would take the role of a Smoking Shelter and no closer than 25 feet from any entrance. Smoking in Scattered Sites would be prohibited from garages and sheds due to the possibility of combustibles/flammable products in those areas. Smoking would be permitted on porches or decks or anywhere outside. Housing Authority staff had developed penalties for violation, including fines and eviction.

W. VandeCastle asked for a motion to approve the written smoke-free policy with the use of E-cigarettes permitted.

A motion was made by S. Popp and seconded by A. LaHaie to approve the written smoke-free policy with the use of E-cigarettes permitted. Motion carried.

4. Review and adoption of Resolution No. 13-05, Adopting Revised Flat Rents and Ceiling Rents for Mason Manor and Scattered Site Public Housing

R. Hallet reminded the Authority that they had decided at a previous meeting to increase the rents by 2% at that time and to reserve the right to increase them again by not more than 2% the next time. At that time, it was decided that the rent increase would take place in November. As such, the options are now limited to either approving the next rent increase in a less than 12-month time period or waiting until the following November. The

first option would run the risk of objection by residents, while the second option would mean waiting almost two years without the rent increase.

W. VandeCastle asked when the last rent increase had taken place. R. Hallet responded that it was approved at the January meeting, but it didn't take effect for most clients until June when the majority of annual reviews are due. The question at hand is when the next increase would be effective.

R. Hallet directed attention to a comparison of Mason Manor to similar housing units. Both comparables had increased their rents by \$5 to \$10. S. Popp inquired if the comparable units had increased rent the year before. K. Vang replied that one of the units had, while the other was unknown. S. Popp stated that based on her experience, residents resent annual rent increases. R. Hallet explained that as discussed last time, Mason Manor had not increased rents for nine years. Furthermore, at the last discussion, we had considered raising it 4% but decided to do so in phases.

N. Aderholdt pointed out that the rent increases only affect a limited amount of residents. R. Hallet presented the fair-market rents that the Department of Housing and Urban Development publishes annually and explained their role in the Green Bay Housing Authority's rent computations. The flat rent calculation is reached by subtracting the utility allowance from the fair market rent.

N. Aderholdt suggested we make the increase effective for January 1, 2014.

A motion was made by S. Popp for a Mason Manor rent increase of 2% to begin January 1, 2014, as it applied to qualifying residents. A. LaHaie stated that her concern as a resident was that her fixed income will not match the rent increase. R. Hallet clarified that the flat and ceiling rent only applies to residents in which 30% of their income exceeds the flat rent. N. Aderholdt explained that the system may lead to a flat rent increase; however, based on income, some residents may not see an increase.

W. VandeCastle asked for a second to the motion. B. Goodlet seconded. Motion carried.

5. Approval to rebid the Scattered Site flooring contract

R. Hallet reported that the Housing Authority holds a variety of blanket contracts, mainly for maintenance work for the Scattered Sites. The current blanket flooring contract is coming to an end, and staff would like approval to bid out the contract again. The previous year's flooring cost was \$64,640, although R. Hallet cautioned that this is not an accurate predictor for coming years because units that recently received new flooring won't need it again for many years. Most likely, the annual flooring cost will be lower next year as fewer units need new flooring each year.

A motion was made by W. VandeCastle and seconded by A. LaHaie to approve the authorization to rebid the Scattered Site flooring contract. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL:

N. Aderholdt reported that the annual Mason Manor Christmas Party will be held on December 9, 2013. All present were invited.

R. Hallet reported on the progress of pest control efforts at Mason Manor. A variety of proactive measures are being taken to combat the issue, including an informational seminar that was held for residents and contracting with private exterminators.

W. VandeCastle asked if efforts were being made to check incoming items for pests. N. Aderholdt explained that Mason Manor staff is in talks to address the issue of checking incoming items. A. LaHaie stated that many residents of Mason Manor acquire furniture from second-hand stores, which creates pest control challenges.

R. Hallet stated that the Housing Authority is financing all pest control efforts because residents are less likely to report pest sightings if they will be held financially accountable for removal. It is an ongoing process, and the Authority will be informed as needed.

FINANCIAL REPORT AND BILLS:

R. Hallet reported that S. Schmutzer was unable to attend this meeting to orally provide the financial report, but that there was nothing out of the ordinary in the report.

A motion was made by W. VandeCastle and seconded by S. Popp to accept and place on file. Motion carried.

This month, the bills were not available to approve and would be reported for approval at the next meeting.

STAFF REPORT:

6. Langan Investigations report for the month of October

The Authority recognized that the informational packet listed 12 housing applications and zero additions for the month of October. Of those, ten were for Mason Manor and two were for Scattered Sites. There was one active fraud investigation that was closed on October 31, 2013.

A motion was made by S. Popp and seconded by B. Goodlet to accept and place on file. Motion carried.

7. Occupancy Report

N. Aderholt reported that Mason Manor currently had four vacant units. The Scattered Sites had three. N. Aderholt explained that in-house transfers at Mason Manor have been put on hold because of pest control concerns. The Scattered Sites currently had two upcoming vacancies due to terminations. Mason Manor currently had four upcoming vacancies, two of which are transfers.

W. VandeCastle asked how long a unit takes to be treated for pests. R. Hallet explained that the resident needs to vacate the unit for four hours. N. Aderholt elaborated that the process is a one-time treatment without follow-up treatments. R. Hallet reported that only units on the first two floors can be treated with heat, while units on higher floors are treated chemically.

N. Aderholdt stated that Mason Manor's occupancy rate for October was 97.4%. The Scattered Sites rate for the same month was 92%, for a combined rate of 96.6%. N. Aderholdt went on to explain that certain units which have remained vacant for rehabilitation reasons should not count against the Housing Authority's overall REAC score. R. Hallet clarified that some units listed on the handout could have been taken off line but were not, but she will try to address that in the future.

A motion was made by S. Popp and seconded by W. VandeCastle to approve and place on file. Motion carried.

A motion was made by A. LaHaie and seconded by W. VandeCastle to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

caa:rah